

108TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. 442

Apologizing to the victims of lynching and their descendants for the Senate's failure to enact anti-lynching legislation.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 29, 2004

Ms. LANDRIEU (for herself and Mr. ALLEN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

RESOLUTION

Apologizing to the victims of lynching and their descendants for the Senate's failure to enact anti-lynching legislation.

Whereas the crime of lynching succeeded slavery as the ultimate expression of racism in the United States following Reconstruction;

Whereas lynching was a common practice in the United States until the middle of the 20th century;

Whereas lynching was a crime that occurred throughout the Nation, with documented incidents in all but 4 States;

Whereas at least 4,749 people, predominantly African-Americans, were reported lynched in the United States between 1881 and 1964;

Whereas 99 percent of all lynch mob perpetrators escaped any form of punishment from State or local officials;

Whereas lynching prompted African-Americans to form the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and prompted members of B'nai B'rith to found the Anti-Defamation League;

Whereas nearly 200 anti-lynching bills were introduced in Congress during the first half of the 20th century;

Whereas between 1890 and 1952, 7 Presidents petitioned Congress to end lynching;

Whereas between 1920 and 1940, the House of Representatives passed 3 strong anti-lynching measures;

Whereas protection against lynching was the minimum and most basic of Federal responsibilities, yet the Senate failed to enact anti-lynching legislation despite repeated requests by civil rights groups, Presidents, and the House of Representatives;

Whereas until the recent publication of “Without Sanctuary: Lynching Photography in America”, the victims of lynching have never been properly acknowledged;

Whereas only by coming to terms with its history can the United States effectively champion human rights abroad; and

Whereas an apology offered in the spirit of true repentance moves the Nation toward reconciliation and may become central to a new understanding upon which improved racial relations can be forged: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) apologizes to the victims and survivors of

3 lynching for its failure to enact anti-lynching legisla-

4 tion;

1 (2) expresses its deepest sympathies and most
2 solemn regrets to the descendants of victims of
3 lynching whose ancestors were deprived of life,
4 human dignity, and the constitutional protections ac-
5 corded all other citizens of the United States; and

6 (3) remembers the history of lynching, to en-
7 sure that these personal tragedies will be neither for-
8 gotten nor repeated.

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